

VZCZCXRO6752
RR RUEHPOD
DE RUEHVJ #0409/01 0911417
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 011417Z APR 09
FM AMEMBASSY SARAJEVO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9988
RUEHPS/AMEMBASSY PRISTINA 0176
RUEHPOD/AMEMBASSY PODGORICA 0055
RUEHVB/AMEMBASSY ZAGREB 0597
RUEHTI/AMEMBASSY TIRANA 0162
RUEHTR/AMEMBASSY ATHENS 0074
RUEHSF/AMEMBASSY SOFIA 0057
RUEHLJ/AMEMBASSY LJUBLJANA 0104
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 0175
RUEHVI/AMEMBASSY VIENNA 0321
RUEHSQ/AMEMBASSY SKOPJE 0291
RUEHPNH/NVC PORTSMOUTH 0021

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 SARAJEVO 000409

DEPT FOR CA/EX,CA/FPP, CA/VO, AND EUR/SCE (MIKE FOOKS); DEPT ALSO
PASS TO KCC; POSTS FOR FRAUD PREVENTION MANAGERS; VIENNA FOR DHS
MARLA BELVEDERE; DEPT ALSO PASS TO DHS SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KFRD](#) [CVIS](#) [CMGT](#) [CPAS](#) [ASEC](#) [BK](#)

SUBJECT: SARAJEVO FRAUD SUMMARY, SEMI-ANNUAL CY2009

REF: 09 Sarajevo 0145

11. This semi-annual fraud summary covers 1 September 2008 to 1 March
12009.

Country Conditions

12. Fourteen years after the 1992-95 Balkan conflict Bosnia and Herzegovina is still recovering from the devastation of the war that resulted in some two million displaced citizens. Of these, approximately 131,000 sought refuge in the United States between 1992 and 2007. The war and its results seriously damaged the economy and left civil records in some areas in disarray.

13. The Dayton Peace Accords from late 1995 organized the country into two entities: The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (predominantly Croat and Bosniak), and the predominantly Serb-populated Republika Srpska.

14. Civil documents in some areas disappeared during the war. Duplicates were often obtained by affidavit and were therefore unreliable for consular purposes. Those affidavits are no longer used, and Bosnians now obtain copies of all civil documents of vital records from the municipal "matarars" (similar to a county clerk).

15. The Bosnian public had high hopes for the 2001 CIPS (Citizens Identification Protection System) project, designed to re-organize the process of Passport and ID issuance and centralization of citizenship information for the entire country. However, arrests of members of the RS Ministry of the Interior, civilian registrars and their assistants (all of them part of the CIPS project) in May 2008 cast a shadow over the credibility of the project. The legal process against the perpetrators is still pending, but there is strong reason to believe that a significant number of CIPS documents were issued to applicants who were not entitled to them. This issue is especially evident in the areas of Brcko, Bijeljina and Srebrenica.

16. An estimated 40% of the population is officially unemployed, but it is presumed that due to the strong black market/grey economy the real unemployment rate is closer to 20%. Many of those with regular jobs often receive relatively low or irregular wages. Bosnians also seek temporary work abroad. However, due to the recent global economic crisis, some of them have returned to Bosnia, especially those who were working in other ex-Yugoslav republics. Reports of mounting job losses within the territory of Bosnia, are an ominous

sign for the future economic situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

¶17. The Balkan conflicts also brought large numbers of third country nationals to BiH including refugees from neighboring countries. Efforts to develop the State Border Service have significantly reduced the number of people entering the country illegally, but there is still more work to be done.

¶18. The BiH government intended to introduce a new biometric passport in 2008, but they failed to meet intended deadlines. We expect the introduction of new BiH passport in December 2009. A more detailed cable regarding the timeline for the biometric passport will follow shortly.

9.The EU and BiH have entered a tentative dialogue about the possibility of lifting visa requirements for BiH citizens traveling to EU countries, but this is unlikely to happen in the near future. Bosnians currently require a Schengen visa to enter the EU. The maximum validity for US B1/B2 and C1/D visas, our most commonly issued classes, is multiple entry / 12 months.

¶10. Islamic mujahedin fighters who came mostly from Middle Eastern and North African countries during the war in some cases obtained Bosnian passports with relative ease from officials of the Federation. Those "citizenships" have been the subject of scrutiny by a Citizenship Review Commission staffed by Bosnian authorities and international community representatives. Legal proceedings to revoke these "citizenships" began three years ago and are moving slowly due to administrative, legal and political obstacles. Nevertheless, numerous foreign fighters already have been stripped of fraudulently obtained citizenship, and the first was deported in

SARAJEVO 00000409 002 OF 003

December 2007. This policy has resulted in recent protests in the central Bosnian town of Zenica, where many former mujahedin settled.

¶11. The latest statistics from the Citizenship Review Commission reveal that more than 1,800 persons born outside of ex-Yugoslavia were granted BiH citizenship in the nineties. The total number of citizenship cases granted was 23,000. The official number of the revoked citizenships by June 30th of last year is 681, most of them born in North Africa, southwest Asia and the ex-Soviet Union.

NIV Fraud

¶12. Attempts to obtain non-immigrant visas by fraud are rare and generally unsophisticated. Post has seen no evidence of organized fraud rings or significant fraud trends among NIV applicants. Post has noted the recent establishment of several tourist agencies whose owners have family ties in the US. These agencies are primarily in impoverished areas of Bosnia, and mainly offer translation, application preparation, interview scheduling and travel services. The agencies primarily target the elderly and uneducated applicants who are daunted by the visa application process. The activities of such travel agencies will bear watching.

¶13. Parents of individuals who resettled in the United States make up the largest percentage of NIV applicants. Post's last validation survey revealed the increasing trend of their children applying for change of status for them during their visit to the U.S.

¶14. Post conducted a validation study for 230 Au-Pairs issued in 2006. Our results showed that nearly half- 48%- of the BiH participants stayed in America. Although a huge majority of them found a legal way to stay (through marriage and studying in the U.S), Post suggests that the high percentage of BiH Au Pairs who have not returned to their country are not fulfilling the spirit of the program. The results of the Sarajevo Au Pair validation study were presented as a power point presentation at the annual Consular Leadership Day in January 2009 in Belgrade. Post will issue a separate cable with more specific details and results for this validation study.

¶15. With the start-up of IV/DV processing at Embassy Sarajevo in October 2007, post has revised and expanded the focus of our Fraud Prevention Specialist. In addition, updated procedures have been established for initiating and tracking local FPU investigations. We continue to enter local lookouts on INK.

¶16. In addition to regularly catching a number of easily detected small-time fraudulent documents in routine NIV investigations, the FPU unit conducted several interesting investigation and outreach activities in the last six months, including trips to Bihac, Velika Kladusa, Banja Luka and Tuzla. FPU also visited Islamic Community of BiH in connection with two questionable R1 applicants appointed by the Islamic Community.

¶17. Post has since benefited from knowledge regarding relevant facts in Islamic Community's organization and appointment procedures. Additionally, the first-hand insight will assist us in better evaluating R1 religious visa requests from Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially in light of new Department regulations regarding R1 visa issuance.

IV Fraud

¶18. IV Fraud: The Embassy began processing Immigrant and Diversity visas for the first time in November 2007. Post has discovered a potentially vulnerable procedure conducted by local municipal public registrars. This vulnerability was outlined in detail in a recent cable (09 Sarajevo 0145). Namely, where a father's name was originally missing on a birth certificate, a person need only make a statement to the local municipal clerk in order to receive an amended valid birth certificate with that person's name.

¶19. DV Fraud: The same as for IV.

SARAJEVO 00000409 003 OF 003

ACS Fraud

¶20. ACS and Passport Fraud: Post rarely encounters ACS or passport fraud, and in the last six months we had only one fraudulent case. In February, Post identified a certificate of birth containing misleading information regarding the father of the child. We determined that the AMCIT father did not meet the requirements for transmission of U.S. citizenship to the child under 7FAM 1131.5-3. Specifically, on the basis of the information and evidence the AMCIT provided, we were able to calculate that the AMCIT did not have physical access to his wife at the time the child was conceived. The AMCIT declined to pursue the claim when presented with the mathematical facts.

¶21. Adoption Fraud: Post has not encountered any adoption-based fraud. Post processed in March 2009 the first ever adoption related IV case in BiH.

¶22. Asylum and other DHS Benefits Fraud: Post recently received a V92 case where the underlying asylum claim was fraudulent. During the course of the interview it became apparent that the asylee's husband and two children lived in a safe environment and no one in the family was ever threatened per the original claim. None of the family members knew how their wife/mother managed to remain in the United States for two years after entering on a tourist visa. This case follows the pattern of a similar asylum matter discussed in our previous Fraud Report in which Post conducted a field investigation in connection with a V92 case we received in April 2008. We wanted to double-check the background of the successful asylum seeker. After going to his home-town in northern Bosnia and visiting several addresses, FPU established that the beneficiary lied about his ethnic background and his family continued to live comfortable life in their apartment in the center of town.

¶23. Cooperation with Host Government Authorities: Post has regular and close contact with Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of

Civil Affairs and Communications, State Border Service, and the Sarajevo Airport. Within the embassy, the Consular Section has excellent working relationships with RSO, LEGAT, Political, and other embassy sections. Additional embassy contacts with Bosnian law enforcement organizations have proven very useful for recent investigations.

¶24. Areas of Particular Concern: None

Staffing and Training

¶25. Consular Section Vice Consul Roger Webb is the Fraud Prevention Manager. NIV Assistant Sead Dizdarevic serves as the Fraud Prevention Specialist. Mr. Dizdarevic participated in a regional Anti-fraud Roundtable in Skopje, Macedonia in October 2007, and will attend the EUR FPP conference in Kiev next month. Mr. Dizdarevic also received FSI training (PC542) in November 2007. Both Mr. Webb and Mr. Dizdarevic serve in these roles as a collateral duty. All other consular staff received regular briefings and cross-training on fraud prevention, and actively participate in Post's FP program.

ENGLISH